

DATE: March 8, 1978

To : Clayton Rich, M.D.

FROM : Joshua Lederberg, Ph.D.

SUBJECT: BUDGETS AND FINANCIAL PLANNING: In response to yours of February 16.  
GENETICS DEPT. narrative

It is understood that there will be many further discussions to outline the future course of the Department of Genetics in the wake of my departure; but I understand the importance of getting something on the record which is a snapshot of our present thinking.

You already have my letter of resignation indicating my departure from the role of department chairman effective July 1, 1978. We have already had considerable feedback from NIH verifying my concern that the viability of extremely important departmental funding hangs on the designation of my successor within the very near future. If this does not happen by May 1, or June 1 at the very latest, I think the consequences could be very grave, however inadvertent. I hope that we will both be able to impress this upon the search committee, keeping in mind that there will be formalities that need to be undergone even after their conclusive action. Obviously, there are many contingencies that could be considered for the future course of the department and its setting within the school of medicine. Nevertheless, I would urge that the most orderly procedure even for the most radical innovation, would be direct negotiation with an authentic spokesman for the department, namely my legally installed successor.

The principal issues with respect to the academic program of the department that can be foreseen at the present time are: 1) the assimilation of Dr. Stanley Cohen into the department more and more fully with the relaxation of his responsibilities in Medicine and with the completion of his space arrangements for his laboratory work. Dr. Cohen already functions as a viable and important member of our group in every respect. 2) The department and I agree that my successor in a professorial role should embody a specialization in medical genetics: that is, the genetic study of disease in human individuals and populations. This would surely embrace a cooperation with departments like Pediatrics, Ob Gyn, and Medicine with joint appointment or not depending on the individual. It would, of course, be most desirable to attract an established figure to provide significant leadership in this direction - which as we have discussed many times before, I believe the school very badly needs. However, the space resources that are obviously visible for this embrace no more than the 1500 and odd square feet that I can bequeath. Hence, it may not be feasible to look for a very senior appointment. In view of the age structure of the department, a youngish associate professor might be very appropriate indeed. An appointment in that direction is less of a departure ideologically speaking, than might otherwise be thought, since my own doctrinal emphasis has been in that direction. If I were to be replaced with another bacterial geneticist that would fail to encompass the impact of my strenuous efforts at relating to clinical programs, at least from a departmental perspective. Furthermore, the

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school has grown a great deal particularly in the directions of molecular biology in recent years; there is a much more obvious deficit in the general direction of medical genetics for which there are the most urgent practical needs which are also expressed in the availability of support funds from external sources. As important as the findings of molecular biology are for the future of medicine, it is hard to justify the case that there are acute shortages in the numbers of peoples being trained in that area: If anything, we are facing serious dilemmas about the placement and research funding for these graduates.

3) Adjunct Professor Elliott Levinthal, in the light of the school wide pressures on space now occupied in part by the Instrumentation Research Laboratory, and in anticipation of future retrenchments in support from NASA, is looking for other avenues in the University for the expression of his unique skills. In fact, he has ample personal funding for the immediate future but he is doing his utmost to find other arrangements that would provide for the greatest convenience of the school at this time of transition. He may be doing this at considerable sacrifice to his own tranquility and I believe that he deserves our earnest appreciation; although I have no doubt that his own long term interests will be better served by this route.

4) Adjunct Professor Gilda Loew presents the most problematical situation as discussed in many previous memos. I will be in further communication with you about her.

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A further account of the options that we are considering - for example, merging with Immunology - would involve the transfer of commitments already established rather than the elaboration of incremental programs. In any case, these discussions are too tenuous to allow more concrete comment at this time. Similar considerations of uncertainties about space which will be the subject of other discussions make it difficult to reach crisp decisions on whether to apply for redispositions of the slots that might be vacated by Dr. Levinthal and possibly, Dr. Loew. We trust that these items will not be lost sight of in the overall turbulence.

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We now have 16 graduate students enrolled (including on MSTP). In addition, we have another 15 postdoctoral fellows (under various designations but sharing the expectation of having a limited period of employment and/or training in the department). This roster is very near the limits of funding and space for the existing faculty, leaving myself out of consideration. Within the staffing patterns just discussed, that total of 31 might expand to 35 or at most 40 over the next 3 to 4 years, depending primarily on the availability of training funds. My own laboratory activities were both parttime (as I had other research and administrative interests), and they were relatively labor-nonintensive compared to programs involving eucaryotic cells and organisms, which would allow for some increase.

#### Financial Resource Changes:

A) We have quite reasonable expectations of a gradual increase in Sponsored Research Funds. The principal hazard, that might have a drastic impact on the funding for faculty support, would be a failure to achieve successful renewal of our departmental training grant in Genetics. We will have to submit a competitive renewal not later than June, 1978. Besides the complications of the vacant chair, this may face a variety of policy problems connected with the national commitment to research training generally.

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On the other hand, Genetics has generally been a top priority among the surviving areas qualified for training support.

Gift funding for the department has been somewhat fortuitous in the past and we have no very visible sources for major increments; on the other hand, it has to be said that we have probably not made as strenuous efforts in that direction as would be possible. Renewed emphasis on medical aspects of genetics should be quite useful from this perspective, as would be the vigor of people like Stanley Cohen.

C. In view of the fundamental stability of the department, its requirements for school unrestricted funds should be approximately level in real dollars to take account of inflation. However, the variety of programs in which I was personally involved had in the past permitted the recovery from restricted sources of virtually all of the funds for my own salary and this quite possibly will not be feasible for my successor.

D. We do not expect new faculty positions other than the replacements already outlined.

The item I would like to end with is what I started with: The importance of getting my successor named and on board and then to be sure that that person has a crack at these same questions from his or her own more responsible perspective.

JL/gel

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "J. Rich", with a stylized flourish at the end.